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ABSTRACT

A study of the verbs used in the management sections of nursing texts looked at the use of verbs as lexical items and grammatical forms and at their form-function relationship. The analysis of verbs as lexical items attempted to establish whether or not there was a common core vocabulary among the four texts studied. The examination of verbs as grammatical forms looked at tense, modal use, and voice. Investigation of the form-function relationship focused on types of communicative function occurring in the corpus. The results suggested that the four texts were similar in the way language was used and that they form a representative sample of the language needed to teach English for special purposes (ESP) in nursing. This method of using linguistic analysis to select appropriate instructional materials and samples of authentic language is recommended for other sciences. (MSE)

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LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS AS AN INPUT TO COURSE DESIGN

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1. Introduction

It should be emphasized from the outset that the linguistic discussion in this paper is by no means intended as an end in itself. It is rather attempted with the following two main aims in mind:

a. testing the validity of a hypothesis that could serve as a basis for the selection of materials in designing ESP 'English for Specific Purposes' medical courses.

b. reporting some linguistic features of the written language in medical-surgical-nursing texts. The findings are assumed to be useful in designing materials for the second year nursing students in the University of Jordan.

The study is an analysis of VERBS that occur in different parts of a textbook on medical-surgical nursing. Sample texts were taken from different topic areas, but in each topic area the specific subject of "management" (in medical terms) was used as the text source (table 1).

The features chosen are:

a. Verbs as Lexical Items.

b. Verbs as Grammatical Forms.

c. Verbs Form-Function Relationship.

The implications of this study for course design are summarized at the end of this paper.

2. Linguistic Features

2.1. Feature 1: Verbs as Lexical Items

The main purpose here is to establish whether there is a 'common core' vocabulary among the four texts studied.

A striking finding was the constant repetition of certain verbs that were associated with particular functions, all of which under the heading 'Management.' For example, the following verbs were found to be frequently and constantly used to express

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the function of treatment: apply, attend to, carry out, do, give, use, treat. Certain verbs, however, were used more frequently than others, e.g. use, treat, etc.

It was thus concluded that the four texts were similar in that many verbs were repeatedly used with varying frequency in more than one text.

2.2. Feature 2: Verbs as Grammatical Forms

A. Verbs that occur without modals: Voice and Tense. A first observation was that both Active and Passive forms were equally used as far as their frequency in each text was concerned.

Another finding was that out of the total number of verbs that occurred without modals in each text, about 50.3% were used in the Active Voice. This, in turn, meant that the Active Voice as well as the Passive Voice forms were equally frequent and equally distributed in the texts of the corpus.

As for the Tense of the verbs that occurred without Modals, the Simple Present was noticed to be the most frequent in each of the four texts (89.1%).

The absence of the Simple Past verbs was noted (1%). Similarly, the Present Progressive and Perfect tenses were found to be rarely used (see table 4 for details).

One could therefore conclude that there is not a significant variation among the texts as far as Tense is concerned.

B. Verbs that occur with Modal auxiliaries: Voice. A major finding was that both forms, Active and Passive, were, relatively speaking, equally frequent and distributed.

As far as the frequency of Modals was concerned, it was observed that:

a. MAY was the most frequent in the four texts (44.3%) in relation to the number of verbs used with modals. Neither was there a significant variation in the distribution of this modal in the corpus.
b. SHOULD was the second most frequent verb in each of the texts (14.4%).
c. MUST, CAN and WILL respectively were less frequent modals.
d. COULD, SHALL and MIGHT were almost absent in the corpus. (see tables6, 7, 8)

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2.3. Feature 3: Verb Form-Function Relationship

The following communicative functions were identified in the corpus:

a. Cause and Effect
b. Signs and Symptoms
c. Surgical Intervention and Treatment

The description of Cause and Effect was found to be realized in one of the following forms:

1. Simple Present (Active)
2. Simple Present (Passive)
3. Modal + Verb (Active)
4. Modal + Verb (Passive)

A possible explanation of the use of the Simple Present could be related to what might be described as 'a great deal of certainty.' The notions of 'certainty and potentiality' can, on the other hand, be related to the use of the modals MAY and WILL respectively.

Verbs that were found to be associated with the description of Cause and Effect included: cause, result, result from, result in, lead to, give rise to, produce, increase, decrease, affect etc. (see tables 9, 11, 13)

MAY and CAN are used in the realization of Signs and Symptoms when there is a sense of 'expectation' and where no reference is made to a particular patient's case. When the writer seems to be quite certain about the types of Signs and Symptoms that indicate certain diseases, the Simple Present (Active) was found to be frequently used. (see tables 14, 15)

The following grammatical forms were noticed to be the most frequent exponents of Surgical Intervention and Treatment:

1. Simple Present (Passive)
2. Modal + Verb (Passive)
3. Modal + BE + ADJ

In the medical context, at least, the Simple Present (Passive) is best described as an expression of 'a standard form of practice' or 'a known procedure'. (see table 17)

A functional relationship was also found to exist between the use of Modal + Verb (Passive) and the suggestion of either a type of treatment or a particular method of treatment. (table 19)

However, when there is a suggestion of a particular course of treatment to a particular expected 'condition' it was observed that MAY + BE + ADJ form was frequently used. (see table 20)

Finally, a relationship was established between the use of MUST and SHOULD and what we might term the 'indication of degrees of necessity' in the application of treatment. Used mainly in the Passive form, MUST and SHOULD were the two main devices to express Top Necessity and Importance respectively. However, when there is a degree of 'freedom' and 'flexibility' in the application of treatment, MAY was found to be frequently used. (see table 21)

3. Implications for Course Design

The findings that have been reported in this study can be best looked at on two levels. First, at the theoretical level, the overall conclusion made was that the four different texts in the corpus were similar to a great extent in the way language was used. There were no significant differences in the basic vocabulary used as represented by verbs. There were also no differences in the frequency and distribution of the common forms that were found to be exploited. Indeed, the results indicated a great deal of consistency in the three aspects studied, i.e., lexical, formal and functional.

What can be concluded, then, is that this 'management' unit can be taken as a representative sample of most, if not all, other 'management' units in the book. We can also conclude that if we set out to teach these language items, i.e. forms, lexis and functions, we can confidently assume that we are teaching the language of a representative sample.

Having pointed that out, I should like to add that in the literature of ESP medical courses we do not seem to find any research-supported criteria on which materials selection has been based.

To prove this, I attempted a review of nine ESP textbooks for medical students published between 1971-1980. The most striking observation was that the majority of these materials

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did lack a basic input, that is, of research into the linguistic features of the language claimed to be taught.

Equally interesting is the fact that Ewer (1981a) has pointed out in a similar survey of EST 'English for Science and Technology' books:

> "Although the textbooks examined claim unreservedly to teach the language of science and technology, there is little evidence that their authors have made the necessary effort to find out what this language consists of in the first place."

Another similar conclusion was made by Robinson (1980):

> " ... very few books are based on any kind of register analysis."

Thus, there seems to be no reason why we should not base our ESP materials on linguistic research into the key features of the language of the particular science that we want to teach.

Preparation of ESP teaching materials, according to Widdowson (1979) should be based on 'rhetorical units of communication,' because this is an 'inescapable' commitment 'once we accept the teaching of communicative competence as our prime objective.'

If it is true that the basic functions, i.e. the description of Cause and Effect, Signs and Symptoms and Treatment in the textbook, which is about 1000 pages, are similarly realized linguistically, then the materials designer can select his or her sample of authentic language more easily, provided that the linguistic features of such sample have been adequately researched and specified.

At the practical level, the previous linguistic analysis can be useful to the selection and design of ESP materials for the students of medical sciences in the University of Jordan. The analysis is based on a textbook which is being taught as a major course book for the second year nursing study. Knowing that none of the nine ESP medical textbooks surveyed has thoroughly incorporated the realizations of three main functions in the medical and nursing discourse, i.e. Cause and Effect, Signs and Symptoms, and Treatment, the findings can be, and have been, particularly useful in designing materials for the second year nursing students in the University of Jordan.

Whatever the type of syllabus - structural, functional or communicative - the materials writer is equipped with a tool that enables him/her through linguistic analysis, to have a clear picture about

a. the major communicative functions in medical discourse.
b. the linguistic realizations of such functions.
c. the basis on which it can be assumed that a representative sample of authentic language is being taught.

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Table 1

1.	TEXT A	
	(a) Communicative Unit	:'Management of Persons with Inflammations'
	(b) Chapter No. 3	:'Body Defense Mechanisms'
	(c) Section No. 1	:'Health and Illness'
2.	TEXT B	
	(a) Communicative Unit	:'Management of Patients with Urinary Incontinence'
	(b) Chapter No. 13	:'Incontinence'
	(c) Section No. 3	:'Common Problems Encountered in Medical-Surgical Patients'
3.	TEXT C	
	(a) Communicative Unit	:'Management of the Person with Liver, Gallbladder, and Pancreatic Disease'
	(b) Chapter No. 25	:'The Patient with Disorders of the Liver and Adjacent Structures'
	(c) Section No. 4	:'Nursing Care of Persons with Specific Medical-Surgical Problems'
4.	TEXT D	
	(a) Communicative Unit	:'Management of the Patient with Burns'
	(b) Chapter No. 34	:'The Patient with Burns'
	(c) Section No. 5	:'Nursing Acutely Ill and Injured Persons'

Table 3: Distribution of Verb Forms in the Four Texts

	TEXT A	TEXT B	TEXT C	TEXT D
Number of words	5600	5220	5940	8140
Number of verbs	709	718	699	1040
Ratio of verbs to number of words	12.6%	13.7%	11.7%	12.7%
Number of verbs without Modals	225	192	225	356
Ratio of verbs without Modals to total number of verbs	35.9%	26.7%	32.1%	34.2%
Number of verbs with Modals	110	144	163	160
Ratio of verbs with Modals to total number of verbs	15.5%	20%	23.3%	15.3%
Number of verbs in the Infinitive form	80	104	64	111
Ratio of Infinitive verbs to total number of verbs	11.2%	14.4%	9%	10.6%
Number of verbs in the Participle form	177	180	145	294
Ratio of verbs in the Participle form to total number of verbs	24.9%	25%	20.7%	28.2%
*Number of BE verbs	78	84	88	110
Ratio of BE verbs to total number of verbs	11%	11.6%	12.5%	11.5%
*Number of HAVE verbs	10	14	11	9
Ratio of HAVE verbs to total number of verbs	0.014	0.019	0.15	0.008

* BE and HAVE are not used here as auxiliary verbs but as main verbs in the sentence.

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Table 4: Frequency and Distribution of Voice and Tense in Verbs that Occur Without Modals

	TEXT A	TEXT B	TEXT C	TEXT D
Number of Verbs	255	192	225	356
No of Active Voice Forms	133	104	108	168
Ratio of Active Voice Forms to total No of Verbs	52.1%	54.1%	48%	47%
No of Passive Voice Forms	122	88	117	188
Ratio of Passive Voice Forms to total No of Verbs	47.8%	45.8%	52%	52.8%
No of Simple Present Tense Forms	241	162	195	324
Ratio of S. Present Tense to total No of Verbs	94.5%	84.3%	86.6%	91%
No of Perfect Tense Forms	9	12	25	14
Ratio of Perfect Tense Forms to total No of Verbs	0.035	0.062	11%	0.039
No of Past Tense	-	2	3	7
Ratio of Past Tense Forms to total No of Verbs	-	0.010	0.013	0.019

Table 5 : Frequency and Distribution of Voice Forms in Verbs that Occur with Modals

	TEXT A	TEXT B	TEXT C	TEXT D
Number of Verbs	209	718	699	1040
No of Verbs with Modals	110	144	163	160
Ratio of Verbs with Modals to total No of verbs	15.3%	20%	23.3%	15.3%
No of Active Voice Forms	43	80	70	74
Ratio of Active Voice Forms to No of Modal Verbs	39%	55.5%	42.9%	46.2%
No of Passive Voice Forms	67	64	63	86
Ratio of Passive Voice Forms to No Of Modal Verbs	60.9%	44.4%	38.6%	53.7%

Table 6: Frequency and Distribution of Voice Forms in MAY Verbs

	TEXT A	TEXT B	TEXT C	TEXT D
Number of Verbs with MAY	48	56	68	85
Ratio of MAY Verb to total No of Modal Verbs	43.6%	38.8%	41.7%	53.1%
No of MAY Verbs in Active Voice Forms	24	42	37	45
Ratio of Active Voice Forms to total of MAY Verbs	50%	75%	54.4%	52.9%
No of MAY Verbs in Passive Voice Forms	24	14	31	40
Ratio of Passive Voice Forms to Total No of MAY Verbs	50%	25%	45.5%	47%

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Table 7: Frequency and Distribution of Voice Forms:SHOULD Verbs

	TEXT A	TEXT B	TEXT C	TEXT D
Number of Verbs with SHOULD	36	29	35	33
Ratio of SHOULD Verbs to total No. of Modal Verbs	23.7%	20.1%	33.7%	20%
No. of Active Voice Forms	9	14	16	13
Ratio of Active Voice Forms to total No of SHOULD Verbs	25%	48.7%	29%	39.3%
No. fo Passive Voice Forms	27	15	39	20
Ratio of Passive Voice Forms to total No. of SHOULD Verbs	75%	51.7%	70.9%	60.6%

Table 8: Frequency and Distribution of Verbs that Occur with Other Modals

	TEXT A	TEXT B	TEXT C	TEXT D
Number of Verbs with CAN	11	31	20	26
Ratio of CAN Verbs to total No. of Modal Verbs	10%	21.5%	12.2%	16.2%
No. of Verbs with MUST	12	23	7	13
Ratio of MUST Verbs to total No. of Modal Verbs	10.9%	15.9%	46%	8%
No of Verbs with WILL	3	5	11	3
Ratio of WILL Verbs to total No. of Modal Verbs	0.027	0.034	0.067	0.018

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Table 9: Examples of the Function of Cause and Effect : Simple Present Active

TEXT	VERB	Page/Line	
A	Cause	p. 42 L. 48	Cold Causes vasoconstriction, ...
B	Cause	p. 201 L. 81	As A Foreign body, it causes irritation of the urethral and bladder mucosa .
C	Cause	p. 543 L. 82	Furthermore, drugs such as the barbiturates are also poorly tolerated and cause an increased cerebral sensitivity to central nervous system depressants of any type .
D	Cause increase	p. 90 L. 3 L. 1	Burns increase the production and loss of heat, and water vapour is lost throughout the open wound; these in turn cause increased metabolism and weight loss.

Table 10 : Examples of the Function of Cause and Effect: Simple Present Passive

TEXT	VERB	Page/Line	EXAMPLE
A	Cause	p. 45 L. 83	It is caused primarily by clostridium prefringens, ...
C	Cause	p. 542 L. 21	Hemolytjaundice presumably is caused by destruction of great numbers of blood cells, which results in the production of excessive amounts of bilirubin and inability of the liver to excrete the bilirubin as rapidly as it is formed,
D	Cause	p. 924 L. 64	This is particularly true when the burn is caused by electricity or by X-rays .

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Table 11 : Examples of the Function of Cause and Effect : Modal + Verb (Active)

TEXT	VERB	Page/Line	EXAMPLE
A	Cause	p. 46 L. 48	If solutions containing enzymes are used, however, care should be taken to keep them off the normal skin, where they will cause irritation.
B	Cause	p. 205 L. 39	Uninhibited bladder contraction, urinary tract infection, or other pathologic conditions may cause enuresis
C	Cause	p. 543 L. 63	The patient's fingernails should be cut and hands kept clean, since itching may be so severe that the patient may excoriate the skin by scratching and may cause skin lesions , which heal very slowly.
D	result	p. 921 L. 23	The patient must be helped to maintain range of joint motion and thus prevent scars from healing in positions that will result in deformity .

Table 12 : Examples of the Function of Cause and Effect : Modal + Verb Passive

TEXT	VERB	page/line	EXAMPLE
A	cause	p. 47 L. 61	An ulcer is an erosion of the skin. It may be caused by infection, second-degree burns, or inadequate blood supply and nutrients to the part.
C	cause	p. 544 L. 57	Direct toxic effects may be caused by drugs (chlorpromazine, tetracyline), by poisons (phosphorus), and by substances used in manufacturing certain products (carbon tetracholride or methyleneds aniline (MDA)

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Table 13 : Frequent Verbs in the Function of Cause and Effect.

TEXT	VERBS
A	create, affect, produce, facilitate, give rise to, lead to, decrease, increase, inhibit, result in, destroy, dissolve, delay
B	eliminate, prevent, facilitate, prohibit, stimulate, respond to, increase
C	affect, provoke, produce, increase, result in, destroy, result from.
D	eliminate, prevent, facilitate, lead to, reduce, increase, result in

Table 14 : Description of Signs and Symptoms : Simple Present Tense

TEXT	VERB	page line	EXAMPLE
A	feel	p. 43 L. 102	The patient feels cold during the initial stage because of vasconstriction as the body attempts to conserve heat .
B	become	p. 75 L. 200	The patient becomes subject to skin breakdown or urinary tract infection, and individual feelings of worthlessness are increased.
C	feel	p. 547 l. 97	During the first few days after the onset of symptoms, the patient feels ill and is content to stay in bed.
D	occur return increase	p. 910 L. 8, 9	A fluid shift occurs in the opposite direction from the initial stage, and edema fluid returns to the vascular system. Blood volume increases, leading to increased renal blood flow and diuresis unless renal damage has occurred.

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Table 15 : Description of Signs and Symptoms : Modal + Verb (Active)

TEXT	VERB	page/line	EXAMPLE
A	develop	p. 47 L. 54	If the infection continues uncontrolled and bacteria reach the bloodstream, septicemia with fever, chills, malaise and increase in the pulse rate may develop.
B	have	p. 203 L. 41	If only the internal sphincter is damaged, the patient may have no acute feeling of the need to void .
C	shrink	p. 547 L. 50	The liver may shrink in size to as little as 600g, in contrast to a weight of 1500m in a normal adult.
D	occur	p. 910 L. 13	Fluid overload may occur, if fluids from intravenous therapy and fluids returning from the interstitial spaces exceed urine production.

Table 16: Frequent Verbs in the Function of Description of Signs and Symptoms.

TEXT	VERBS
A	become, develop, feel, accompany, perspire, appear, occur, notice, complain, follow
B	become, develop, occur
C	develop, feel, accompany, appear, occur, indicate, show, reveal , begin
D	become, develop, appear, occur, complain, rise, fall, begin

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Table 17: Surgical Intervention and Treatment : Simple Present Passive.

TEXT	VERB	page/line	EXAMPLE
A	apply	p. 43 L. 6	Thus, if appendicities is suspected cold is applied to the lower abdomm to try to prevent rupture of the appendix with subsequent peritonitis and to aid in decreasing pain.
B	do	p. 201 L. 99.	If a catheter must be used for a prolonged period, a cystostomy is frequently done.
C	order give	p. 547 L 84	If the patient's temperature is high and nausea and vomiting are severe, infusions containing glucose are given and occasionallysolutions containing other electrolytes and protein hydrolysates are ordered.
D	notify	p. 912 L. 62	The physician is notified if hematuria and/or a positive Hemastix reaction is present.

Table 18: Surgical Intervention and Treatment : Modal + Verb (Passive)

TEXT	VERB	line/page	example
A	use	p. 44 L. 71	For these reasons, hypothermia may be used to treat serious generalized infections, ...
B	use	p. 203 L. 12	To improvise protection for the incontinent male patient, a shower cap can be used.
C	do	p. 544 L. 76	Rest in bed and general supportive care are presently all that can be done beyond the general measures used for patients with any hepatic disease .
D	wrap	p. 910 L. 52	Once the wound is cooled, the victim may be wrapped for transport to a medical facility.

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2. Suggesting a Particular Method of Treatment. (in this case or is a common feature as well as by or through).

Table 19 : Suggesting a Particular Method of Treatment : Modal + Verb . Passive.

TEXT	VERB	line/page	EXAMPLE
A	apply	p. 42 L. 24	Warmth may be applied through dry heat by means of hot water bottle, heating pad, lamp, or flannel covering, or by moist heat in the form of wet dressing or soaks.
B	use	p. 200 L. 104	However, if the patient's condition or response prohibits such a program an internal or external drainage device may be used
C	use	p. 543 L. 32	If prothrombin time is extremely low, mouthwash or cotton swabs may be used instead of a toothbrush to prevent bleeding gums .
D	give	p. 914 L. 2	Antibiotics may be given prophylactically or they may be withheld until an infection does occur

Table 20: Surgical Intervention and Treatment : Modal + BE + Adj.

TEXT	VERB	line/page	EXAMPLE
A	BE	p. 42 L. 48	In those instances when the inflammatory response is not desired, that is, when further tissue damage or increased pain can occur because of the effect of the fluid exudiate, application of cold rather than heat may be more effective
B	BE	p. 200 L. 11	In the instances where the cause is tissue damage, repair of the tissues and retaining of muscles may be effective in reestablishing continence.
D	BE	p. 920 L. 45	If the person is unable to eat the quantities of necessary nutrients, total perenteral nutrition (TPN) (p. 158) or tube feedings may be necessary.

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Table 21 : Indicating Degrees of Necessity in Treatment : Modal + Verb (Passive).

TEXT	VERB	line/page	EXAMPLES
A	Keep	p. 43 L. 60	The room should be kept free from dust ;...
A	clear	p. 46 L. 5	Wounds must be cleaned of infection before healing can take place .
B	carry out	p. 200 L. 38	When it is possible, toileting should be carried out in surroundings that will remind the patient of the voiding function, that is, the patient should be taken to a bathroom.
	make attend to	p. 200 L. 89	Again, provision must be made for a minimum intake of 3000ml/day. Mobilization and positioning voiding must be attended to.
D	permit	p. 19 L. 19	Persons with upper respiratory infections should not be permitted near the patient.
	increase	p. 920 L. 5	The protein, fluid, vitamin, mineral and caloric intake must be increased during the acute phase of burns to maintain the patient's nutritional state, and to repair and replace tissue destroyed or injured by the burn.

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